## The Wild Family of Monroe.

TUNKHANNOCK, Wyoming Co., Pa.

January 15, 1874. William Parks, aged about twen-ty-one years, has been lodged in jail at this place for repeated at-tempts to take the life of his father, Stephen Wells Parks, of the town of Monroe, this county. This brings into prominence the history of the Parks family, known as the "Wild Family of Monroe," which, without exceeding the bounds of truth in the least, is one of the most singular on record.

In the fall of 1871 a party from Pittston, Luzerne county, were hunting in the mountains of this county. In a wild, lonely spot, miles from any habitation, one of them, hearing a rustling in the leaves and bushes on one side of him, was astounded to see a young wothe leaves, apparently for beech nuts. She was on her hands and knees, and was not aware of the hunter's presence for some time. When she saw him she uttered a harsh cry and started off like a deer out of sight. Determined, if possible, to find out something more in First West Street, regard to this singular apparition, the hunter summoned his companions together, told them what he had seen, and proposed that they follow in the direction she had taken, and endeavor to learn where

she came from. The party walked for about a mile through the woods and came to a small clearing. In one corner of this clearing was a miserable hovel, built of logs and with a roof of straw. They went towards it. Be-fore they reached it the girl who had been seen by their companion came out of the door, and following after her was a boy, also entirely naked. They jumped about the door, as if playing, on all fours, picking up something from the ground occasionally and eating it. The hunters stood for a moment speechless with surprise at the most singular spectacle, and then ap-proached nearer. They were soon seen by the wild beings—for wild they surely were—who at once ran swiftly off and hid in the woods. Coming up to the door of the hut, the hunters looked in. On a bench in the middle of the room sat ar old man, reading from a large book which rested on his knees. His clothing was scant and ragged, and white beard reached nearly to his waist, and, like his hair, was matted and unkempt. There was no furniture in the room, except the was scattered about, as if for a bed. The bare ground formed the floor. Near one end of the room a hole was dug, in which there was a fire. Over this was an iron kettle in which something was boiling. Everything betokened the most abject wretchedness; filth and dirt were on every side.

The old man arose when the strangers came to the door. He was below the medium height, and had a sharp, tright eye and an in-telligent face. He invited the gentlemen into the house, and asked them, in polite terms, the nature of their errand. The hunters were at a loss at first to explain, but finally told the old man what they had seen in the woods and about his door, and expressed a curiosity to know who and what the strange beings were.

The old man laughed and said:
"Those are my children, William and Melvina—brother and sister. They appear peculiar to strangers, no doubt, but I'm used to em. Clothes are of not much account, anyhow, here in the woods.'

The old man then stepped to the door and gave a peculiar shout. Very soon his children were seen to emerge from the woods and come stealthily toward the house, gesticulating and chattering a strange gibberish and now and then laughing idiotically. They came near enough to afford a sufficient scruthe exception of the lower limbs, which were distorted. The girl's face, although lacking any sign of intelligence, was not unprepo ing. Their heads were small, the foreheads sloping far back. Long, matted hair hung from their heads, and their skin was nearly black with dirt and exposure. While the strangers were looking at them, the boy, with no apparent provoca-tion, struck his sister a blow in the face, uttering a peculiar cry. She ran across the clearing and the boy followed her, seizing a stick that lay on the ground. Their father started after them, shouting, "Let her alone, Bill! Let her alone, I say!" "Bill" did not catch his sister, however, and ran off in another direction. The old man returned to his guests, who could not repress their astonishment and disgust, but solicited an explanation of the ex-traordinary and incredible scenes which they beheld.

The old man, without any hesitation, told them the history of himself and his wild children. His name, he said, was Stephen Wells Parks. He was born in Luzerne county, Pa, and was fifty years of age. When he was twenty-five years of age he married and moved with his wife to the farm where the hunters found him. His wife's health, he said, was poor, and her mind weak. His daughter Melvina was born in 1850. She never had any care from her mother after she walked, and no clothing except a cloth wrapped about her when it was cold. William was born two years afterwards, and was treated in the same way. Parks and his wife believed that it was useless to clothe their children out in the wilderness where they lived. Neither of the children ever spoke a word beyond their strange gibberish, which they apparently understood. They ran wild in the woods, living on roots, ech nuts, berries, and s killing and eating snakes and toads. Walking so much on their hands and knees, hunting their food, oc-casioned the distortion of their legs. Melvina had always been of a docile, gentle disposition and easily managed. William was quite the contrary. He was vicious and ugly from the time he could ereep, and at the time the hunters discovered the family was getting quite

unmanageable.

The "farm" was used merely to raise enough potatoes and pumpkins to furnish food for the mother and father. The children seldom ate at home, and slept in the woods when the weather was not too cold —sometimes being gone for days at

a time. In 1867 the wife of Parks left was getting so unmanageable and ugly that she was afraid of him. She took with her another child, a baby, and had never returned. Up to the time of the visit of the hunters Parks had lived alone in the mountains with his wild, mute, idiotic children. If he had occasion to go away he always tied Bill up in the house with a strong rope for fear that he might kill Melvina. Parks said he found them a great burden, and their him, stating as a reason that "Bill" kill Melvina. Parks said he found them a great burden, and their care interfered with his studies. Surrounded by wretchedness and filth, the father of these brute-like offsprings had learned the Bible almost by heart, being able to repeat whole chapters at will from any portion of it. He was also well versed in history and mathematics and had invented a system of sale at the News Office.

shorthand writing which he used with wonderful dexterity. He exhibited specimens of penmanship executed by himself which were really elegant. He also recited selections from Shakespeare in a manner that astonished his hearers. He said he regretted his wife's absence very much, as it prevented him from investigating an important etymological theory

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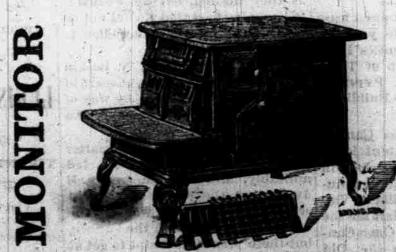
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Huntsville, F. A. Hammond.
Hooperville, Gilbert Belnap.
DAVIS COUNTY.

S. PETERSON is Presiding Bishop over the three last W. G. SMITH is Presiding Biar

WM. W. CLUFF presides over Morgan County and the above Your Wards in Summit Co.

ing Bishop over the above six Wards. BRAHAM HATCH, Presiding

JOHN ROWBERRY, Presidin

UTAH COUNTY. A. O. SMOOT, Presiding Bishop BOOK AND CLOCK SHELVES AT DINWOODEY'S,

> over the three last named places. American Fork, L. E. Harrington Alpine, T. J. McCullough. . E. HARRINGTON, Presiden Rishop over the two last named

> J. S. TANNER is presiding Blakes, over the four last named places. Goshen, Wm. Price. JOEL GROVER, Presiding Italies

> > Faylor.
> >
> > SANPETE COUNTY.
> >
> > Fountain Green, R. L. Johnson.
> >
> > Moroni, G. W. Bradley.
> >
> > Fairview, Amass Tucker.
> >
> > Mount Pleasant, W. S. Seeley.
> >
> > Spring City, Frederick Olsen.
> >
> > liphraim, Kanute Peterson.
> >
> > Mauti, A. J. Moffitt.
> >
> > Gunnison, J. S. Horns.
> >
> > Fayette, John Bartholomew.

JOHN R. MURDOCK, Presiding \*Beaver, John R. Murdock.
Minersville, James McKnight.
IRON COUNTY. Paragoonah, S. S. Smith. Parowan, W. H. Dame.